

157 but they were never the equals in accomplishment of the men of middle age and over. So positive judgments were not made of young men. They were just *hêlê*, who had yet to make many attacks on the Brazilians and who had yet to bathe their spoon-shaped lance blades in the blood of a vendetta enemy. We can understand now why a man's *awaikeyu* did not influence a young woman in the choice of a husband, for all men were assumed to be *awaikeyu* and only the warriors of middle age or over could be adjudged as outstanding.

582 If the absence of emphasis on hunting skill, the knowledge that relatives will always feed them, and the lack of expectation of great deeds from *hêlê* effectually muffled all estimates of young men, the concentration of vital effort in the hands of males and the scarcity of women with a number of brothers eliminated the necessity for judging of *atêdga*,<sup>9</sup> young women. After all, what could they do? What techniques did they have that men had not? Only the increasingly unimportant techniques of textile weaving and pottery. The most important occupations, hunting and basketry, were masculine. As for brothers-in-law, they were good to have, and polygyny that did not provide them was to be avoided, but the small and scattered populations made it impossible to demand brothers-in-law as one of the conditions of marriage. Marriage among the young people was and still is, therefore, largely a matter of chance. It is the crystallizing-out of informal sexual relations, which may be due solely to their own initiative, when the couple feel that their needs will be satisfied by the relationship or when they may be instigated by some one of their relatives who sees that they are lovers and decides that they ought to live together.

593 If human beings followed our ideas of consistency the ethnologist's task  
584 of investigation and understanding would be simple. If the Kaingang were  
eager to marry off the daughters for whom they have such a difficult time  
in providing, it would be perfectly understandable. But the Kaingang see  
parents as so attached to their daughters, so full of misgivings at the fate  
that might await them at the hands of their husbands, that they sometimes  
have fits of anger when they are approached by a go-between. They are  
sometimes pictured as clinging to a daughter so strongly that they must be  
asked to "let her alone." Not the parents, but some other member of the  
family, a brother or an uncle, is often the one who is concerned because a  
son or daughter is without a spouse. With certain reservations, the follow-  
ing conversation is typical of a dozen others that I recorded.

When Toodfin became interested in marrying off his cousin's son  
Vombê, he went to the latter's father and said, "I am going to ask Kemblên

<sup>9</sup> *at*, woman, *êdga*, fit (noun or adjective), *oid* of animals; hence desirable; also, new or fresh, *oid* of tools or weapons.

593 for one of his children." Kemblén was Tondúin's younger brother. "For  
594 whom are you going to ask him for one?" "For [your son] Vomblé. He is  
● full-grown, but he has no wife. I have been waiting for someone or other  
to send a daughter to him, but they never do; so I am going to send one of  
Kemblén's daughters to him." Then Vomblé's father said, "What shall I  
do? He is full-grown; yet no one sends a child to him. If you tell Kemblén  
he may be angry. But tell him." When Tondúin told Kemblén he sat in  
silence and at last said: "I shall never send her to some *kéiŋ* who will beat  
her when I am dead and gone. Send her to some one of your affinal rela-  
tives who treats you well. Then he will give you food and ignore me, eat-  
ing it alone. He will not give any to me." "That is what he said," remarked  
Vomblé, as he told it to me; "he was a fool." But in the teeth of Kemblén's  
anger his brother sent Kulá to Vomblé, and he married her. If a young  
couple do not decide to take matters into their own hands they may con-  
tinue as lovers indefinitely. At last someone may take enough interest in  
their affairs to assume the task of go-between. Then in the face of opposi-  
tion they cheerfully settle down—at least for a while—and continue their  
relations with the various parties as if the waters had never been troubled.

595 The culture has so little immediate stake in marriage that it exercises  
itself very little about it. There are no dramatic stories of girls who were  
betrayed to boys they did not like, of sudden passion interrupting a pre-  
arranged marriage, of flight by night and lonely wandering in the forest  
away from enraged parents or from potential in-laws who felt themselves  
cheated of the prize for which they had already paid dearly. There are no  
ramifying laws of incest for the violation of which the culture might ad-  
minister a swift and violent punishment. The assumed personal equality of  
all young people, the dead level of economic conditions, the lack of accu-  
mulated property, and the fact that there are no class lines make all plan-  
ning for a first marriage unnecessary. The relatives of the young man do  
not have to save up over a long period of time to pay for the bride, nor do  
they have to sit awake at night for fear that she might be suddenly raped,  
toppling at one blow the complicated structure of preparation and throw-  
ing the community into an uproar. Kaingfng marriage, except when it  
becomes the temporary concern of some go-between, is the immediate affair  
only of the principals. And even the go-between has no stake in the mar-  
riage. It is true that he (or she) automatically becomes the in-law of the  
young man, but this is not particularly important in a society of myriad  
relationships; and if the young man refuses the young woman who is  
"sent" to him the matter is forgotten.

596 Polygyny comes about in Kaingfng society in the same informal, almost  
accidental manner as monogamic unions. In Kaingfng ideology one of the

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 524 Through her marriage <sup>JUNGLE PEOPLE</sup> Nela's family gained Yemlé as an ally in the quest for food. Even before marriage a girl's sexual interests are beneficial [43] to her family, for her lovers come with presents of food, and they are welcome at her parents' fireside. The food a lover brings is not payment for favors he has received but a gift in expectation of favors still to come. Even after her marriage a woman's amorous intrigues are of considerable advantage to those around her—even to her own husband, for every time she attracts a man she has added a hunter to the band. Wherever his mistress is, there the lover stays, and unless her husband gets wind of the affair and flies into a rage the lover may very likely follow the camp almost indefinitely. His presence is welcome, of course, for another gun or bow and another knife and axe mean so much more meat and honey. Thus even adultery plays a constructive role in Kaingáng society, for it keeps within the band men who might otherwise go elsewhere in search of satisfaction, and it often culminated in polyandrous marriage, which has been one of the strongest integrating forces in Kaingáng society.

595 The story is told of Kuvén who was the lover of both Kanggá and her 592 mother. Now as Kanggá's father grew old and it became difficult for him to get meat, he felt more and more the necessity of having someone to help him hunt for his large family. As long as Kuvén remained he could depend on him, but when it seemed that the young man was becoming interested in Yemá, a woman who was no relative of his and whom, therefore, Kuvén might follow far away to her relatives, Kanggá's father said to his wife and daughter: "Call Kuvén; if he marries Yemá he will leave me and go away. Let him get food for your children when I die. If he marries another woman he will throw your children away." So Kanggá's mother called Kuvén and said to her daughter: "Marry him. I am going to live with you and him." So Kuvén married both mother and daughter, and when Kanggá's father died Kuvén took care of the latter's children.

621 The Kaingáng have no system of clans or moieties<sup>1</sup> to impose social obli- 671 gations on them. Their kinship system is not the crystallization of inescapable obligations that is found in many other primitive societies but principally a device for grouping people in large age classes. Their mode of life also made the maintenance of complex systems of obligations and loyalties extremely difficult, for they wandered from place to place in little groups of two to twenty adults. Even the biological family had little permanence as a cooperating unit, for children wandered away from their parents when 674 they grew up and brothers separated to go with their in-laws or to travel with childhood playmates and hunting companions in search of adventure. Under the influence of the conflicting obligations of blood and marriage the composition of the small group of adults was forever changing. The dependence of the men on one another, and even their fundamental reali-

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix II, p. 175.